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DAN SMOOT

VIOLENCE AND CRIME IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The main battle ground in American society has shifted from college campuses to public schools.

An official of the National Education Association (NEA) says the high school principal is replacing the college president as "the most embattled American." Robert Finch, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, says "we must be prepared for much greater disorders" in junior and senior high schools than we have ever seen in the colleges.(1)

Dr. James V. Allen, U. S. Commissioner of Education, says that "student unrest" in high schools has become a major national problem. Allen has sent letters to the nation's school officials suggesting ways to allay student unrest. He did not counsel "hardline responses." Instead, he urged school officials to make this a year of "communication, responsiveness, and relevant change."(2) That was to be expected of Allen: recommending more of the same permissiveness that has encouraged "student unrest" — which is a liberal euphemism for vicious criminal behavior, pro-communist revolutionary activity, and mindless violence.

NEA officials, Robert Finch, and James V. Allen advocate forced school-integration — which is a primary cause of the violence and turmoil they bemoan.

The Senate Juvenile Delinquency Subcommittee's recent report on conditions in 100 school districts for the period 1964-1968 reveals that serious student assaults on teachers in public schools occur daily throughout the country. Conclusive statistics are not available. Some school boards are reluctant to disclose the facts. Others apparently keep no record of student assaults on teachers. Others began keeping such records only recently. But such statistics as the Senate subcommittee managed to get for the 1964-1968 period indicate an alarming condition.

Reported assaults on public school teachers by students totaled 1065 in Chicago in 1968; 181 in Los Angeles; 180 in New York City; 64 in Washington, D. C.; 17 in Boston.

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On November 22, 1968, San Francisco public schools started keeping records of violent incidents. Before the end of the school year, they had recorded 136 assaults on teachers, 224 threats to teachers, 996 assaults on other students.[3]

Assault on teachers is only one type of crime rampant in public schools throughout the land. The following facts are indicative.

On April 24, 1969, a small group of Negro students threw a fire bomb into the auditorium of Morris High School (the Bronx), and then went on a rampage, trying to wreck the building. Police stopped the disorders, and later arrested two faculty members for planning and organizing the violence. One was Cyril Boynes, age 23, a mathematics teacher who served as faculty adviser to the Morris High School's Afro-American Cultural Club. Boynes was indicted on ten counts for arson, riot, unlawful assembly, weapons possession, and conspiracy. The other faculty member was Jerry Wooley, age 20, who was accused of conducting secret karate classes in the school.[4]

On the evening of May 18, 1969, in Glassboro, New Jersey, an 18-year-old Negro stabbed a white high school football star. The Negro was arrested and charged with atrocious assault and battery. The incident triggered race fights later that evening between roving bands of whites and Negroes. Thirty-seven persons, 17 of them adults, were arrested. The mayor of Glassboro said racial tensions which caused the brawling may have been related to recent demonstrations at a high school in nearby Franklinville.[4]

DuVal Senior High School (Prince Georges County, Maryland) has an integrated enrollment — about 25% Negro, 75% white. It has been the scene of racial fights for the last two years. On September 29, 1969, the principal gave Negro students permission to stage a sit-in demonstration, emphasizing their demand for a black-studies curriculum. Some white students staged a counter-demonstration. Race relations were strained to the breaking point. Minor racial fights occurred frequently thereafter. On January 6, 1970, two students, a Negro and a white, got into a fight. Others joined in. School authorities have given no details on what happened, but it is known that some Negroes were expelled following this January 6 fight. That increased resentment among Negroes. A major racial fight occurred January 12, involving about 30 students — 22 of whom were charged with disorderly conduct. None was expelled.[5]

In September, 1969, Montgomery County, Maryland, teachers, responding to a poll, placed "teacher protection" and "discipline in the classroom" high on their list of what is most needed in schools.[6]

On October 11, 1969, Eugene Kidwell, 29-year-old vice principal of Gwynn Park Senior High School (Prince Georges County, Maryland) was serving as a chaperone at the school's annual homecoming dance. An ex-student came to the door and used abusive language, harassing students and chaperones. The school custodian, a teacher at the school, and Mr. Kidwell went to the doorway. The ex-student slashed Kidwell's throat from ear to ear (making a wound that required 50 stitches), slightly wounded both the other school employees, and fled. The school principal said he called county police, but the police denied they had been notified. At any rate, no arrest was made.[7]

From an October 26, 1969, Associated Press story:

"At San Bernardino, California, High School, English teacher William Threat suffered a broken rib, concussion, and serious chest injuries when he was knocked down and kicked while trying to aid principal George Dibs who was fighting off several pupils.

"In Manhattan's Public School 116, a student kicked teacher Myra Entenberg, who was previously assaulted September 12. Another teacher in the same school, Evelyn Zucker, was bitten

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by a pupil in April and hit with a chair this month. . . .

"In Minneapolis schools last year four teachers were attacked in one month, one of them stabbed with a fork."

On November 3, 1969, three or four Negro students beat up a white student at Stonewall Jackson High School in Charleston, West Virginia. Next day, both white and Negro students came to school armed with rocks and chains. A big race fight, and an attempt at arson, resulted.[8]

On November 10, 1969, about 400 students (half of them white, half of them Negro) had a race fight at a high school in San Bernardino, California. This incident was triggered by Negro resentment of whites who had complained because school authorities refused to discipline rowdy Negroes for starting fights at football games.[8]

On November 11, 1969, 100 Negro students at Chapel Hill (North Carolina) Senior High School demanded immediate dismissal of a teacher. When their demand was refused, they raged through the building dragging unwilling Negroes out of classrooms (calling them "uncle Toms"), attacking whites, committing vandalism. Two white girls, one white teacher, and one white boy were assaulted. Property damage was estimated at $1411.38.[8]

On November 20, 1969, 50 Negroes stormed into the school cafeteria at Washington High School (Milwaukee) and assaulted white students, injuring 12 of them, two of whom were hospitalized. The Negroes were expressing dissatisfaction with official response to Negro students' demands for more Negro courses and Negro teachers. Angry white students threatened retaliation. Race fighting between large numbers of Negro and white students resulted the next day.[8]

On November 21, 1969, Negro students in the balcony of the Atlantic City (New Jersey) High School auditorium threw trash on the heads of white students below. A race fight resulted, with about 40 students involved.[8]

On November 24, 1969, a white girl, who had been dating a Negro student, came to class at Western High School (Las Vegas) under the influence of narcotics. This caused fights between white and Negro boys in the school parking lot, between white and Negro girls in the school cafeteria. Next day, white students tried to keep Negroes from entering the school. A race battle involving about 200 students resulted.[8]

In November, 1969, at Ranier Beach Junior-Senior High School in Seattle, a race fight, involving about 100 white students and 100 Negroes, broke out following a showing, at the school, of film believed to have been distributed by Students for a Democratic Society — SDS,[8] a communist-dominated group, largely white, which specializes in disruptive violence and incitation of Negro hatred of whites.

In 1969, fire insurance rates for all types of school buildings in California were raised 40%, because California colleges and high schools have suffered so much arson and vandalism.[9]

On the night of January 13, 1970, vandals attacked the Severn Elementary School in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. They broke 180 window panes, overturned two pianos, scattered the contents of office desks, dumped typewriters on the floor, broke potted plants, emptied fire extinguishers. Damage was so extensive that the school was closed for repairs. The county director of school services said there had been other cases of school vandalism in the county this year, some "worse than this." The school custodian saw a boy, about 11, in a hallway breaking windows early on the night of January 13. He chased the boy but did not catch him or identify him.[10]

On October 30, 1969, United Press International, in a story from Fontana, California, reported that Mrs. Owen Temple (age 41, mother of 7) had taken her two teenage daughters

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(Deborah 17, Cynthia 16) out of Fontana High School, because she feared for their safety there, and because the girls were "frightened of the society at school. . . . afraid to go into a restroom alone."

On February 6, 1970, Mrs. Temple told me her daughters were never directly victimized by undesirable behavior at Fontana High, but were exposed there to "other students taking narcotics, violence against students and faculty members, student disrespect for teachers, unwed pregnant girls and mothers attending the school, race riots, and a sex education from teen-aged mouths that would make a street-walker shudder."

UPI reported local police as saying there was a potential drug problem at Fontana High, because several arrests for drug violations had been made near the school, though none thus far had been made on the campus.

Mrs. Temple has enrolled her two teenage daughters in a correspondence school. They are happy with this arrangement, their mother says, and are getting a much better education than they were getting in high school.

Mrs. Temple said school officials at first put pressure on her to send her daughters back to school, but recently have been letting her alone.

On February 6, 1970, John Price, superintendent of Fontana schools, told me he admires Mrs. Temple for acting in support of her beliefs, but feels that conditions in Fontana High are not as bad as Mrs. Temple's statements indicate. He said:

"The problems we have in Fontana High reflect conditions in the general society around us: a breakdown in old moral values, an assault on principles that we all used to hold as essential in our way of life. We are aware of the problems. We are concerned about them. We are doing everything possible to correct them."

Under California law, school-attendance for children is compulsory to age 18. Mr. Price said, however, the school system is not contemplating litigation to force Mrs. Temple to return her daughters to the public school.

NEXT WEEK: More on this problem.

REMINDER

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FOOTNOTES

(1) John Herbers, New York Times News Service, Nov. 6, 1969

(2) UPI, Oct. 5, 1969

(3) AP, Oct. 26, 1969

(4) New York Times News Service, May 20, 1969

(5) Washington *Evening Star*, Jan. 13, 1970

(6) Washington *Sunday Star*, Sep. 28, 1969

(7) Washington *Evening Star*, Oct. 14, 1969

(8) "Race Hatred Flares in Nation's Schools," syndicated column of Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, Jan. 12, 1970

(9) Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner*, July 17, 1969

(10) Washington *Evening Star*, Jan. 14, 1970

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